



# *The Virginia Saltwater Review*

Plans and Statistics Department  
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<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov>

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by

Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division

## **OVERVIEW**

Tuna were hot offshore this week with a multitude of bluefin and yellowfin tuna as well as citation bigeye tuna. Shark, dolphin, and wahoo were also biting. Inshore, cobia and spadefish stole the show with a few flounder citations and red drum release citations in the mix of reports.

The Hampton Creek Cobia Tournament was held last Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>. Ryan Summerford, of Newport News, won first place with a whopping 77.5-pound bruiser. A big thank-you to Kathy at Wallace's Bait and Tackle, who without hesitation answered a call for assistance and allowed the weigh-in to move from downtown Hampton to Wallace's when the tournament scales malfunctioned. Though our biological team was only able to get four cobia samples before the weigh-in relocated, we are looking ahead to July 11<sup>th</sup>, when Wallace's Bait and Tackle's Cobia Tournament will be held (captain's meeting July 10<sup>th</sup>).

**The Virginia Saltwater Review will not be published next week—Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009. The fishing report will resume with the July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 issue. Happy Independence Day!**



## **\*\*\*SPECIAL NOTICE ABOUT TILEFISH AND GROUPER\*\*\***

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission voted unanimously on May 26, 2009 to enact recreational landing permits and mandatory harvest reporting for tilefish and grouper species. These two new required permits were made available as of June 21, 2009, and the regulation will go into effect on July 1, 2009. **The permits are free.** The permits are specific to the vessel being operated. The permits are only available at MRC Automated Agents (<http://mrc.virginia.gov/mrcagents.shtm>). (continued on next page)

### **\*\*\*SPECIAL NOTICE ABOUT TILEFISH AND GROUPER (Continued)\*\*\***

If your vessel is already registered with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, or if your charter boat is already registered with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, then you only need to proceed to a MRC Automated Agent to provide any additional information and receive your permit.

<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov/charter/reports/> (MRC Automated Agent Locations)

If your vessel is not registered with either VDGIF or VMRC, then please fill-out a Tilefish and Grouper New Vessel Application Form and follow the instructions on the form so that staff can pre-register your vessel prior to you proceeding to a MRC Automated Agent.

[http://mrc.virginia.gov/forms/New\\_Vessel\\_Registration\\_for\\_Tilefish\\_Grouper\\_Permit.pdf](http://mrc.virginia.gov/forms/New_Vessel_Registration_for_Tilefish_Grouper_Permit.pdf)

Also, ALL permittees are also required to report their catch. This can be done online at one of the following web locations:

[www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com) (for Tilefish and Grouper Recreational Permits)

<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov/charter/reports/> (for Tilefish and Grouper Charter Permits)

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### **THE FISHING REPORT**

#### **Chincoteague**

Chincoteague is seeing the greatest flounder fishing in 10 years, according to Donna at Captain Bob's. When weather cooperates, the flounder can be found around the area; they have recently moved from the Queen's Sound to directly in front of Captain Bob's Marina. A few kingfish and croaker have been spotted near the inlet, but have not reached the back bay waters yet. Offshore waters are hopping as well, with a 151-pound bluefin tuna caught at the Lumpy Bottom last week. Several mako sharks in the 100- to 120-pound range have come in from the same area. The Parking Lot has also been productive.

#### **Onancock**

In Onancock, Captain Wil reports a mix of predominantly spot and croaker biting on squid and bloodworms. A few flounder over 19 inches were also reported.

#### **Wachapreague**

At the Wachapreague Marina, there was a good yellowfin tuna bite over the weekend. Several 50- to 55-pound yellowfin tuna came in from waters just south of the Norfolk Canyon. Inshore, there are numerous flounder, but keepers are scattered.

Offshore fishing has been really good with yellowfin tuna, dolphin, and a few wahoo caught in the last week, according to staff at Captain Zeds. Inshore, small flounder were found in Hummocks Channel, the inlet between Dawson's Shoal and Paramore Island, and at Drawing and Green channels. A few croaker have been spotted as well, and staff expects to see more in the next few weeks.

## **Cape Charles**

According to staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle, anglers have been catching spot and croaker near Kiptopeke and near Oyster. Cobia (around 40 pounds) are biting near Buoy 13, and 2 red drum were hooked off of Fishermen's Island. Nice keeper flounder have been around Buoy 42 and Lumpy bottom.

## **Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel**

Anglers out of Cobb's Marina were still catching spadefish at the Chesapeake Light Tower last week. Flounder have been caught at the second and third islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and Spanish mackerel were caught outside the jetties along the beach at Little Creek.

According to staff at Sunset Boating Center, fishing has been really good, and anglers were catching a mixed bag of red drum, bluefish, spadefish, and keeper flounder.

At Salt Ponds Marina, a 7-pound, 11-ounce flounder citation was reported. The fish was caught in the bay with a bucktail jig. Numerous cobia were also reported throughout the area.

Several citations were reported from the York River Fishing Center. Two citation cobia, one 56 pounds, 8 ounces, and the other, a whopping 72 pounds, 8 ounces, were caught at the York Spit. Red drum release citations were earned at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel for 48- and 52-inch fish. Overall, the York Spit area has been good for cobia fishing, and a few areas of the York River are producing some nice flounder. At the Gloucester Point Pier, a mixed bag of spot, croaker, and a few flounder were reported.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

The fantastic yellowfin tuna bite continues. Fish are being caught around the 100-Fathom Curve from the Norfolk Canyon on down to east of the Cigar. Boats are coming back with limits of tuna ranging from just legal to pushing 70 pounds. Gaffer dolphin are also in the catch along with the occasional wahoo and a few bigeye tuna. These fish are feeding on 9-inch squid, which seem to be very thick out there. A few billfish have also been caught, but for the most part, the catch is yellowfin tuna. Closer to shore, bluefin tuna have been caught by anglers fishing the 20-Fathom Curve and some of the inshore hills. Both small bluefin and those in the 150-pound class are around. Plenty of bluefish are also on the inshore hills. Spadefish continue to be caught at the Chesapeake Light Tower, and the bite on structures in the bay is picking up. Spadefish are being caught at the Cell and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, especially the third island. Sheepshead fishing has picked up at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and speckled trout are being caught around Gwynn's Island. Cobia continue to be the most sought-after fish in the bay. Catches have been mixed for both chummers and sight casters. Both techniques are producing good catches and skunks, which is typical cobia fishing. Cape Henry is the hot area for Spanish mackerel, though they have been encountered all along the oceanfront and in the lower bay. Some large red drum continue to be caught, but not many anglers are targeting them now. The Buoy 10 area remains a good spot. Satellite tags placed in large red drum earlier this year will begin popping off this week. Any tag recovered will be worth \$100 to the lucky finder. The rest of us will get to find out where these fish

are. Plenty of flounder are being caught, though most are throw-backs. The best catches are coming from the Cell area and from anglers live-baiting the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. There will be some large flatfish caught this week as the best flounder anglers in the bay will gather to compete in the Flounder Bowl. With the anglers fishing this tournament, no doormat will be safe.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The saltwater action continues to heat up along the mid Atlantic coast and should continue to only get better. The big news inshore is still cobia. Cobia chummers are doing well, with many boats returning from the shoals with keeper fish and a few trophies weighing up to 80 pounds. The areas off Hampton, from the Rock Pile to Buckroe Beach, are producing fish. The Nine-Foot Shoal and Latimer Shoal areas are also producing decent catches lately. A few cobia are also cruising the surface and hanging around bridge pilings, making targets for sight casters. The first big cobia tournament of the season, the Hampton Creek Cobia Tournament, was won with a 77.5-pound bruiser.

Although red drum are overshadowed by the cobia interest, red drum are still available along Fisherman's Island and the Nine-Foot Shoal areas. Most catches are incidental by-catches by boats targeting cobia. Several boats released dozens of bull reds while chumming for cobia this week. Although slow, recent black drum hook-ups are coming from the four artificial islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, casting bucktails.

Spadefish action is hit and miss around the Chesapeake Light Tower lately, but the four islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, as well as the pilings, are producing good catches of respectable fish. Inshore wrecks are also holding good numbers of spades, as well as the Cell and Wolftrap Light further up the bay. The sheepshead action is picking up along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, while triggerfish are becoming a nuisance in these same areas. Tautog became legal again this week and will willingly take your offerings of crab or fiddlers on inshore wrecks and along the islands and Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel proper.

The flounder scene is faring well in most of the usual flounder haunts lately. Although still weeding through many shorts, good numbers of keepers are coming from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel area. Live baiting over structure is working best for the larger doormats. Bigger flatfish are also coming from within the inlets. Speckled trout and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are still available within the lower bay inlets and within the back waters of Mobjack Bay.

Spanish mackerel action is very good right now, with larger keepers now becoming more consistent. These fish are making a great showing along the ocean front, with the Cape Henry area the hot spot lately. Keeper-sized Spanish were even boated inside Lynnhaven Inlet this week. Trolled Drone and Clark spoons offer good, fast action for kids and guests. Once the water clears a little more along the beaches, king mackerel should make its debut.

Amberjack are showing on wrecks and navigation towers. The action is good, but right now, the majority of the fish are ranging between 44 and 48 inches. A few citation-sized fish over 50 inches are around, but plan to put in the time.

Deep dropping along the Canyon edges is still giving up good numbers of deep water species, such as tilefish and grouper. Sea bass are also still available on structures from about 30 miles out and out to deeper wrecks.

The Virginia offshore season is heating up, and the yellowfin tuna bite is still the main attraction, with outstanding numbers of fish still the norm. A few bigeye tuna are also around, with school-sized bluefin tuna available on some of the inshore lumps, where the Hotdog produced this week. Mako sharks are making a showing, with several reports of these sharks helping themselves to trolled spreads.

### **Virginia Middle Bay**

Roger, with Jett's Hardware, reports the croaker and spot fishing has been slowing down a bit, probably moving into deeper water in response to the warmer water. The spot have been getting larger and will continue to get larger as time goes by. A few grey trout and small bluefish have been showing up as well, with large flounder around the jetties on the Potomac River. Rumor has it that some Spanish mackerel have been caught in the local traps, but history shows that it will be a few more weeks before people can count on them being available.

Dan, with Smith's Point Marina, reports that overall the fishing has been okay. Croaker continue to bite in good numbers, and anglers targeting these have been rewarded. Small spot are around as well. There were keeper flounder caught around the jetties along with striped bass. The number of people has been limited with all of the wind, but the forecast is good for the weekend, so maybe the fish are there and waiting.

According to Captain Jim Thompson, from Deltaville, the fishing has been off and on for a week or so, but it is now improving as the spot are making an early arrival this year. In a few weeks, they will be the mainstay of the catches. Croaker were medium in size, and the spot were small in last week's catches. Spade and flounder fishing are slow, but the dog shark have arrived and are a lot of fun to catch. There is nothing in Butlers Hole yet and very little in the bay for serious bottom fishing. All the fish seem to be in the Piankatank and Rappahannock rivers.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

High winds kept many fishermen off the water this weekend. Bay surface temps near the Cell had reached 76 degrees on Friday, the 19<sup>th</sup>. Spadefish were available at the Cell this weekend, but not in large numbers. One spadefish citation was reported (10 pounds, 5 ounces, 21 inches) from there on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Fresh clams fished in a slick of clam chum work best for these fish. The creeks and rivers are full of spot and croaker. Both species can also be caught from the beaches. A speckled trout citation was also recorded this week (5 pounds, 1 ounce, 24 inches) from Gwynn's Island. From the looks of the boats anchored up, there are some speckled trout around the Hole-In-The-Wall.

## **Virginia Beach**

At the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, a citation, 186-pound bigeye tuna was brought in from the Norfolk Canyon. Offshore waters produced a citation amberjack last week as well as good numbers of bluefin and yellowfin tuna. There were large spadefish at the Chesapeake Light Tower, and a 9-pound, 2-ounce spadefish was brought in last week.

There has been really good fishing over the past week at Fisherman's Wharf Marina. Staff report nice bunches of yellowfin tuna ranging from 30 to 40 pounds and a 163-pound citation big eye tuna. Nice dolphin were landed, and there was a release citation for a mace shark. Most of this action has come from the area near the Triple Os. Inshore, staff has seen nice spadefish catches in the area.

## **Virginia Piers**

Spot, croaker, and flounder (with some keepers) have been caught daily at the Ocean View Fishing Pier. The largest flounder was 24 inches last week.

Anglers were catching spot, a few sea mullet, croaker, bluefish, undersized flounder, and Spanish mackerel at the Lynnhaven Pier. Crabbing was also doing really well.

At the Virginia Beach Pier, fishing has been slow over the past few days. However, nice black drum were caught last week, along with spot, sea mullet, and numerous skates. Crabbing continues to be good.

At the Little Island Fishing Pier, spot, large red drum, and Spanish mackerel were reported.

According to staff at the Buckroe Fishing Pier, spot and croaker have been caught, day and night. Keeper flounder have been landed, and Spanish mackerel were caught during the daytime hours. Some bluefish are also mixed in.

## **Outer Banks, NC**

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet continues to have a strong dolphin bite. As water temperatures increase, look for these fish to start moving closer to shore. The yellowfin tuna bite has been improving, and wahoo, king mackerel, bonito, tilefish, and bigeye tuna have been showing up in angler creels. All three species of billfish are around, but not in great numbers. Mid-range offshore anglers (15 miles offshore) have been catching large striped bass, and bottom droppers on the reefs have seen black sea bass, tautog, and a few grouper. Nearshore has been dominated by bluefish and Spanish mackerel. Pier and surf fishing continue to see the typical pattern of spot and croaker for those fishing blood worms and shrimp while anglers throwing metal at the ends of the piers have seen quick runs of bluefish and Spanish mackerel. Inside fishing has seen keeper flounder being caught in the Oregon Inlet and speckled trout early in the mornings.

Surf fishing south of Oregon Inlet has been slow. A few big bluefish, sea mullet, Spanish mackerel, and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) were seen on the northern beaches with Ramp 43 producing better than other areas. South beaches had scattered reports of bluefish.

Offshore fishing out of Cape Hatteras continues its trend of a good gaffer-sized dolphin bite. Blackfin tuna, king mackerel, and wahoo were showing up as well. The billfish bite has consisted mostly of sailfish. Inshore fishing has been good with the bluefish and Spanish mackerel biting fast moving spoons.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.








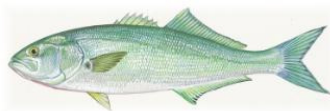
# ***ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!***

## **THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION**

***WANTS YOUR FISH....  
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,  
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,  
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM
			
TAUTOG	KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a  
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,  
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

**Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:**

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)  
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)  
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)  
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**





# ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

**Get Hooked!**  
**Report at**  
**[www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com)**

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

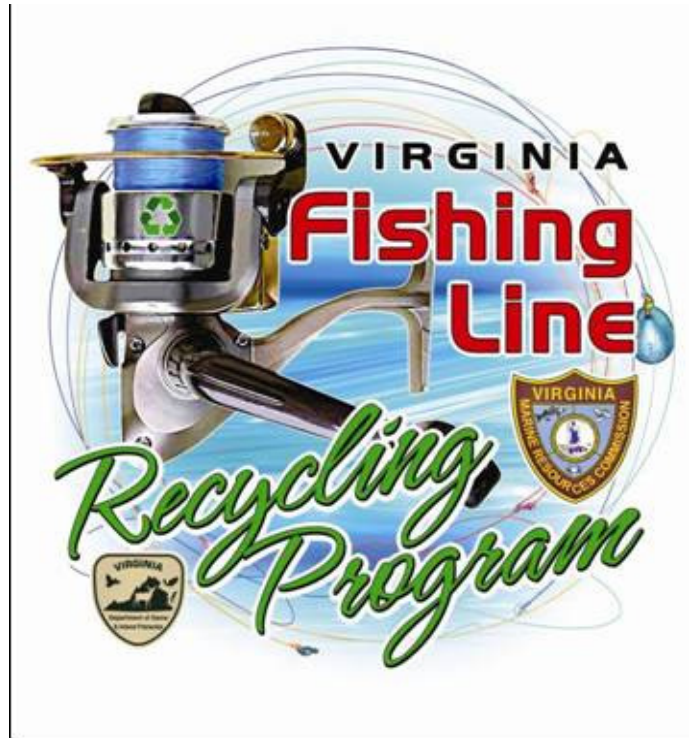
Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at [www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com).

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's "Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" website. The header includes the commission's name and logo. The main content area is titled "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" and includes a welcome message to "Jgrist". It features two prominent announcements: "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" and "New 2008 Tautog Regs". A sidebar on the left shows statistics for June 16, 2008, including 1,457 members, 295 trips, and 3,941 catches. The bottom of the page has a "Related Links" section.

# Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

- Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:
  - fish
  - birds
  - marine mammals
  - boaters and swimmers
- Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!



## VMRC-Managed Locations!\*

Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk

Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach

Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton

Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles

Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague

**\*DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia**

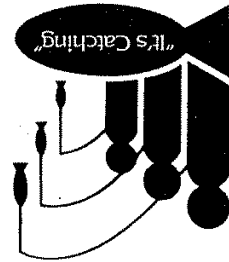
**The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation.**

**If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email [alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov](mailto:alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov).**



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*Practice*

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